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HER HARVEST



Learela Haechter

HER HARVEST

By

Carla Waechter

Posthumously Published Under the Direction of

Her Son, Herman P. Waechter

and

Her Friend, Emilia Joan Schneider

With Numerous Illustrations

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THE HEART OF THE WORLD

THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Has the heart of the world been growing old,—
Has every drop of its blood been sold,
And is the world like a miser old
Treasuring nothing more highly than gold?

Nay, we ourselves are the drops of blood;
And the heart of the world is the heart of God;
Eternal hope is our pilgrim's rod
Leading beyond the graveyard's sod.

The heart of the world is not cold indeed,
Though we smother its warmth by selfish greed;
And never was there a greater need
The smoldering fires of love to feed.

CHEER UP!

There are days when we are thinking
Of the hopes that we saw sinking,—
When we notice everywhere,
Cause for worry and despair.

Then, again, it is surprising
How some days the sun is rising
On a world not half so bad,—
When you wonder why you're glad.

Now the thoughts that come to cheer us,
They are ever just as near us
As the ones that threaten doom
And present all things in gloom.

For within us is the power
To select thoughts calm or dour,
And it surely is worth while,
To fight worries with a smile!

LIFE EVERLASTING

What is there in me that deserves to last
Till Earth and Heaven, Time itself is past?
Why should a God express so strange a whim
As to want me eternally with Him?

I strongly feel that Death not endeth all:
The weary leaves when to the ground they fall
Pass on their substance to a coming day,—
And life is as eternal as decay.

LIFE'S OPPORTUNITY

What though in madly onward rushing,
Success had let you reach your goal,—
Look out! Look out! Lest you discover
You were as blind as any mole.

You realize you've never missed them:

These opportunities that came:
To gather gold, to fight for glory,
To make the world respect your name.

And yet, you feel a strong misgiving:

Though much you have, still more you miss;
The one important thing neglected,
Life's opportunity, is this:

To make in quiet, solemn moments,
Connection with a higher sphere,—
To find a path that leads to brightness
When all sinks into darkness here.

LIFE'S WINDING WAY

Were all the mysteries of Life
Forever cleared away,
And could we read the future
Until our dying day,

Life's voyage would be like unto
A straight and dreary road,
And we its weary travellers,
With time a heavy load.

There'd be no chance for us to dream
 Of babbling brooks' delight,
Of wondrous flowers that might bloom
 On pathways to the right.

Quite useless it would be to guess
 The wonders we might meet,
Where we to follow to the left
 The crowded, busy street.

And though we fear, we know not what,—
 Though many hopes are vain,—
We know to-morrow may bring joy,
 Although to-day brought pain.

CRISS-CROSS LINES

There's a new little criss-cross line,
I've noticed to-day in that face of mine;
It's no improvement whatever, I fear—
What was the reason for it to appear?

I know that somewhere I've read or heard,
That each of the lines stands for a word,
As grief, or anger, or just old age—
The latter is crawling all over the page.

It's not so easy aright to spell
What the criss-cross lines are meant to tell ;
And I believe it's best not to care,
When a newly-discovered line is there.

So, after I looked at it quite a while,
Courageous enough, I felt for a smile ;
What then I discovered, it was no joke :
That smiles still more criss-cross lines do provoke.

IN MEMORY LAND

The best thing that there is in life,
When all of it is told,
Is this : To think of bygone days,
When one is growing old.

Whatever fetters you may wear,
Were it an iron band,
They fall aside,—your feet have wings,—
In memory's fair land.

There shines a sun of happiness,
Its rays are warm and clear ;
The silver lining, which the clouds
Oft hide from us, is here.

You see past sorrows through a veil
That's of a silvery hue—
No land but that of Memory
Could lend that veil to you.

HEAVEN AND HELL

There's but one road to Heaven,
While many lead to Hell;
Just miss that road to Heaven,—
You're on the one to Hell.

But you don't get to Heaven
By switching off from Hell;
You have to plan for Heaven,—
Or else you land in Hell.

Still, just to plan for Heaven
Does not steer clear from Hell;
Not till you are in Heaven
Are you quite safe from Hell.

LIFE'S CHARM

When life becomes a habit,
Its greatest charm is lost;
We may not always see it,—
Too high, though, is the cost.

The way to get the utmost
In life is known to few;
It is: To start life daily
With interest anew.

But if your understanding
To dreamless sleep you lull,
Life can't be interesting,—
It surely must be dull.

You may think there is nothing
That's new for you in store;
Each day, though, brings a sunrise
That was not seen before.

And absolutely certain
Is but one single thing:
That life is most uncertain
In all that it may bring.

RAINDROPS

Little drops of rain
On the window-pane,
Sometimes when you rest,—
Do you think what's best?
Do you contemplate
How to change your fate?

Little drops, though you
May not think it's true,
Still Creation's laws
Thus are without flaws,—
Nothing can be done.
Little raindrops, run!

And it seems that I
Just as vainly try
To direct the strife
Through my earthly life:
Does Fate mark my way
Each hour of the day?

PRISONERS FOR LIFE

We often wonder, as through life we go,
About the meaning of our stay below;
We trust that death leads to a higher sphere—
And yet, we mourn the dead while we are here.

As prisoners of life we are encaged
In earthly bodies until disengaged
By death, we enter freedom's zone at last,
Not what we thought was freedom in the past.

That was a mockery: Though ever we
Would keep on fighting,—thinking we'd be free,
If all our enemies could be subdued,—
Alas! How often was the fight renewed.

True freedom cannot force us to a fight.
It stands revealed as sunshine after night,
When death,—it may be soon or may be late,—
Comes to unlock our earthly prison's gate.

LIFE'S SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

To carry your burden of sorrow
To one who feels happy and glad
Is certainly wrongfully selfish,—
For, why make another heart sad?

To speak of your various troubles,
So other unhappy ones hear
Can never be right, for it ever
Spreads gloominess further, I fear.

Life's sorrows are merely the shadows:
Our path cannot always be bright.
Don't linger, but bravely march onward,—
Life's sunshine will soon come to sight.

HIS VOICE

There is a God above us,
Who hears and sees it all:
The troubled eyes, the pleading
In every creature's call.

Perhaps you sometimes wonder
Why help must be so slow—
His guidance, though, is with you
Wherever you may go.

Don't think you are forsaken,
That unheard is your cry,—
Perhaps you did not listen,
When God made His reply.

His voice comes in a whisper,
To every troubled soul:
"Just try your best, and surely
At last you'll reach the goal."

SICKROOM BULLETIN

Poor Humanity is ailing,
And the symptoms are quite grave,—
Of no help were the prescriptions
Which ambitious quacks her gave.

She feels worse, instead of better,
And calls out in great despair
For a doctor who can cure her;
Is there such? Pray, tell her where!

Send him hither and assure him
That important is the call;
If he were to be successful,
His reward would not be small.

Everything is topsy-turvy,
But there's one thing that I prize!
That the great ones don't consult me
As to what *I* might advise.

LIFE'S BATTLEFIELD

Don't feel sorry for yourself
When getting knocks and blows;
They surely cannot harm you much,
For character thus grows.
The ones who always safety seek
In all they say or do,
Meet dangers of stagnation that

No ray of light shines through.
Not they are weak who struggle on,—
For they may hold their own,—
But they who seek for shelter safe
Ere danger they have known.

Give me the world to battle in,—
The world in which to roam,—
But give me just one peaceful place,
And let that place be Home!

GROWING OLD

When I was young the world was young,
And gaily through the heavens swung;
The sun would laugh, the moon would smile,
Wild roses grew near every stile,
Each leaf a secret might unfold,
Each blossom could a message hold,
A joy to every season clung,—
When all the world was young!

The mirror shows my hair turns gray,
And all the world looks old to-day:
The sun no longer is as bright,
The moon says nothing but “good-night,”
Too high are stiles to climb, I vow,
The flowers fade so quickly now,
And winters are so bitter cold,—
When all the world is old!

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

I stood before St. Peter's gate,
Thus dreamt I, being ill,—
But, then, our dreams need no excuse,
They come and go at will.

St. Peter kindly said to me:
"You are ahead of time,—
I cannot let you enter yet
Into our heavenly clime.

"We have examinations here
For entering, you know;
I'll ask you a few questions now
Ere back to earth you go.

"Now, tell me what would you declare
Your worst fault seems to be?—
And what as your best quality
Most clearly can you see?"

"St. Peter," said I, "all through Life
My faults I used to change;
They never were the same for long,—
I've often thought it strange.

"The angel who records my faults
Must surely feel relieved,
When once my earthly pilgrimage
Is happily achieved!

“The virtue of which I might boast
Is that my work I do
Real gladly, though it must include
The washing dishes, too.”

St Peter’s face grew bright at that,
He kindly stroked my head:
“We’ll try you on the ‘Milky Way’, ”
He said, “when you are dead.”



LIFE'S BLESSINGS

We count Life's many worries
At least twice, if not more;
But when we count our blessings
We overlook a score.

How often we're in danger,
We do not even know,—
It might add to the blessings
A goodly number, though.

But even with the blessings
Most evident and clear,
We have a better memory
For every bitter tear.

Now, most of all the mishaps
Are such but for a time!
Pray don't count it a blessing
That now I end my rhyme.

LIFE'S PLAY

Death gives the musicians a sign to stop;
The play is over,—the curtain may drop.

The public stays awhile to applaud,
To praise your work, or call you a fraud.

Then they go home and soon they'll forget
How you played your part,—how the stage was set.
But if you have won a heart that is true,
It never ceases to grieve for you.

EARLY MORNING

It's early morning: in the street
One hears the hurried steps of feet;
The houses look but half awake,—
They're waiting for the sun to make
A special effort, ere they'll think
It time their windowed eyes to blink.

And one of them shakes off its dreams
Long after all the rest, it seems;
It looks about, still partly dazed,
At all the sunlight much amazed;
And almost as if they felt pained
Appear its shingles, weather-stained.

It seems to grieve in every beam,
That it's no longer time to dream

Of forests dense with stately trees,—
When everywhere life's busy bees
Now hurry in excited haste,
That not one moment go to waste.

PESSIMISTIC NATURE

A thoroughgoing optimist
Who thinks that “all is well,”
And firmly clings to that belief,
No matter what folks tell,

Who mildly judges foolishness,
So rampant in our day,
By saying: “Well, the world is young,—
All this will pass away.”

Who, when the war is spoken of
Will say: “The world is old,—
And customs, though they're barbarous,
Retain a certain hold.”

That optimist should answer give,
If he is able to,
Why nature sides with pessimists?—
Each year I find this true.

The almanac has spring begin
Ere March has gone away,
When icy blizzards come along
And winter rules the day.

December twenty-second should
Be winter's entrance date:
But winter comes ahead of time,—
And spring is always late.

THE EXPERT WEAVER

Of old age the well-known traces
Easily you can perceive,
When you see the worn-out places
In the veil that Hope doth weave.

Youth is evermore supplying
Her with just the proper thread;
Later on poor Hope is trying
Substitutes to use instead.

When she finds the thread is breaking,
And the time is getting late,—
Hope, such tedious work forsaking,
Leaves it all to Weaver Fate.

THE STORE-ROOM OF FATE

At times I am awake and grieve,
When other folks are sleeping;
And then, when I feel glad and free,
Those others may be weeping.

There is a store-room, full of grief,
But just as full of pleasures,—
And sometimes we possess the key,
To choose amongst those treasures.

Alas! we are not always wise,
Nor is the place well lighted;
For often we select a grief
That looked like joy when sighted!

OLD AGE

It's not so bad to know that furrows
Must line the smoothness of my brow,—
I know that love, or else politeness,
Keeps folks from noting such things now.

Nor do I care that youthful pleasures
Will surely then fail to entrance,—
It's rather fun to watch the couples,
And sit in comfort while they dance.

True love will then turn into friendship,—
Is that a cause in age to grieve?
It's simply an exchange of treasures:
We'll not be poorer, I believe.

And, even if age made me lonesome,
If death unclasped the friendly hand,
I should but see the bridge more clearly
That leads us to a better land.

If I'd be spared the only trouble
Which makes me think of age with fear:
That strength and energy don't fail me
To do my work,—let age come near!

WHO ARE THE DEAD?

They who are dead are not so far away,
If but our hearts still love them day by day;
Don't think of them as dead,—although they must
Allow their bodies to return to dust.

They wore the dress that all of us must wear
Till we are ready for the one more fair,—
The one for which no measurements we find,
While we still seek them with an earthly mind.

Must they be dead,—merely because they died?
How do we know till we ourselves have tried
Whereto may lead that final open door
That lets us through, then closes as before?

But there are those who think our earthly state,—
Its weal or woe and everchanging fate,
With birth at one, death at the other end,—
Is all that Powers Above to us would lend.

And since they cannot see it with their eye,
They straight away Divinity deny.
Are they, then, living? Nay, they are the dead,—
And are the ones that should be mourned instead.

THE OLD MUSIC-BOX

“A song, as played on music-box of old”:
This information did my program hold.
I listened to the first bars with a smile,—
This silly tinkling was so out of style.

But suddenly the present time I fling
Away,—yea, far away!—and hear it ring
Like tiny silver-bells out of the past:
I see the quaintly-furnished room, where last
A music-box I heard in childhood days,
Before Life led me on its many ways.

And there arises at the gentle call,
The childhood time of others,—of us all:
The days when serious men and ladies fair,
To listen to such tinkling, time could spare;
When sweetest sentiment this could evoke,
When hands would meet, in passion voices choke.

We can't go back, except in dreams but short,
For dreams are more than ever idle sport;
And who would not much rather stride ahead
Than now to live, as they lived who are dead!

Whatever problems, new or old, we face,
Advance we must,—the world is in a race!
To days of music-boxes say good-bye;
The music changes,—so do you and I.

THE LAST CHAPTER

It was a summer holiday,
I sat in a shady nook,
And on my knees there rested
An entertaining book.

With very serious problems
The present chapter dealt;
The heroine felt puzzled,—
As well she might have felt.

I sat awhile just dreaming;
Then came a playful breeze,
And settled all the problems
As lightly as you please.

Thus Time will turn the pages;
And problems of to-day
Are all, in Life's last chapter,
Forever cleared away.

THE MOTHER HEART

“IT’S A BOY”

It is scarcely now five minutes
Since they’ve laid him to my breast,
And my baby has repaid me
In a way supremely best.

For my sufferings I’m rewarded,—
I’m repaid beyond what’s fair;
Nothing in the world is equal
To my baby nestling there.

And there is a binding contract,
Baby-boy, between us two:
That I’ll try to make you love me
Just as much as I love you!

MY LITTLE HERO

Oftentimes I’d been explaining:
“See, the doggie isn’t bad!
Pussy likes to have you pet her!”
Little courage showed my lad.

Mother’s hand to clasp most tightly,
Or still better, Mother’s lap,
Was his ever-ready refuge,—
Nothing there could scratch or snap.

But when in the park he noticed
Mother looking down with fear,
At an ugly caterpillar
To her face so very near,

Though he trembled for a moment,
A protector she had found,
For his little fingers bravely
Threw the monster to the ground.

It was but a little action,—
Might provoke a smile of scorn ;
Yet I claim true heroism
At that moment had been born !

COMPANY MANNERS

“I was ashamed to see you naughty,
When Mrs. Brown was here to call ;
You were so disobedient, sulky—
I did not know my boy at all !”

“Yes, Mother dear, but I was watching
My locomotive on the track ;
And accidents I thought might happen,
Before I had time to get back.

“And afterwards it made me angry
Because I saw that Mrs. Brown

Was not like company behaving,—
She called me ‘naughty’—with a frown.

“I know real company sits always
Just sweetly smiling on a chair,
And when I come they say: ‘Oo darling,
Tum here; let’s see oo booful hair!’ ”

BIBLE LESSONS

“Mother, speak not of salvation!
Something else I’d like to hear;
Of the ‘miracles’ please tell me,—
I just love them, Mother dear.”

“Yes, I’ve noticed that, my darling,
For last night you jumped about
When I told them, and awakened
Baby-brother with a shout.”

“That was nice, though, darling Mother,
For he then could listen, too,
As you said dear Jesus wanted
All the little ones to do.”

“Not to miracles alone, though.
And, besides, they make you dream:

You were quite too much excited,—
Woke last night to cry and scream!"

"Mother, I believe salvation
Is for little brother right;
But I like to get excited,—
Please, one miracle to-night!"

THE OLDER BABY

The younger baby was fretful,
And Mother sang lullabies,
The way that mothers sing them
When darling baby cries.

The older baby was standing
Close by his mother's knee;
The tear that hung in his lashes
She did not even see.

The tear thus hung there, glistening,—
No use for it to fall;
For troubles of older baby
There was no time at all.

Since baby-sister from heaven
Has come,—thus he was told,—

He ought to stop his crying,
For now he is "too old."

The older baby looks puzzled :
This life is surely queer ;
Although he's too old for crying,—
Down splashes that big tear.



A SAFE WISH

My little son once pitied me:
"It must," he said, "just awful be
To have to work like you all day,
While I can run about and play;
And I just hope for me and brother
That none of us becomes a mother!"

I laughed and answered: "When you're grown,
You'll like work too,—not play alone;
You'll have your wish, though, that is fine!
For I am sure, no son of mine
Will be a mother; he will rather,—
In fact, I'm sure he'll be a father."

PLAYING SCHOOL

I hear through an open window,
A few little girls at play;
The one is asking severely:
"Why are you late to-day?"

"The clock was wrong!" is the answer,
And Teacher says: "That excuse
I really hear too often,—
Another you'd better use.

“I’m pretty sure you picked flowers,
Or played on the way with your ball;—
Or were you roller-skating,
And maybe had a fall?”

The other girlie protested:
“Our clocks are always slow!”
So Teacher said: “Do not trust them;
Try sooner from home to go.”

Then it was time for their spelling:
One girl spelled “c-a-t, cat”;
The next was equally eager
In spelling “r-a-t, rat.”

The third was highly indignant;
She said the game wasn’t fair.
“I can’t spell ‘bird,’ and you know it;
You shouldn’t ask it,—so there!”

Some day you will learn, little girlie,
That Life’s clock is fast,—not slow:
Good fortune seldom grants to us
To be asked the things that we know.

CROSSING THE STREET

One of the memories I would not miss,—
A very precious one to me,—is this:
The memory of how my childrens' hand
Slipped into mine, while waiting we would stand,
 Watching our chance, safely to cross the
 street.

We saw the autos madly dashing past,
And heavy freight, until a space at last
Would be comparatively danger-free;
Nor could my children any danger see
 When, with their hand in mine, we'd cross
 the street.

I well remember how I felt a shock
The day when I no longer was the rock
That promised safety,—when they looked about
With careful eyes, and when we went, without
 Their hands clasped into mine, across the
 street.

But lately quite a change has come for all:
When I walk with my sons, long since grown
tall,
Hands are stretched out as in the bygone years,—
For Mother's safety each of them now fears,
 And they protect me, when we cross the
 street.

THE TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY

You're twenty-one to-day, and nevermore
Are you the "minor" that you were before.
You'll be responsible for word and deed:
To tell you that, my son, there is no need.

It may surprise you, though, that I can see
The time when you a "miner" are to be;
That from the word you'll not be quite estranged,
Although a letter of it has been changed.

The mines of Life spread out before you now;
With precious treasures they are filled, you vow.
You're right, my son!—I'm sure you're right—
and yet,

That all's not gold that glitters, don't forget!

Be wise enough no drudgery to shirk,
But waste no time on silly, useless work;
Well stocked with proper tools keep heart and
mind,
To take and keep what worth-while you may
find.

When troubles come (in every life they must),
That yours be "minor" ones I hope and trust;
But meet them bravely,—don't go on a strike—
Great blessings often come on days we do not
like.

THE MOTHERS AT HOME

Oh, do not call it easy
To stay at home and pray
For loved ones who are fighting
Three thousand miles away!

There's something deep within us
That cannot stay behind;
Unerringly it follows,
And knows the way to find.

Where fighting is the thickest,
In terror it will stand,
And gaze, with horror stricken,
All over "No man's land."

It sees the sons of mothers
Wherever men may fall,
And feels no consolation
Can ever comfort all.

Oh, do not call it easy
To stay at home and pray
For loved ones who are fighting
Three thousand miles away!

CHILDREN

Whenever I see children,
The thought will come to me:
How scarce without their presence,
The smiles in life would be!

Their artless ways will conjure
A smile on many a face
That bears the mark of sorrow, —
That shows of tears the trace.

This world may be mismanaged
In many a different way,
But smiles will not be lacking,
While merry children play.

THE SCHOOL BULLY

“Mother, in school there’s a boy who can fight!
And, Mother, he says it would serve me right,
If to-morrow I’d have reason to cry,
Because after school he blacken my eye.

“They call him a ‘bully,’ — he’s big and fat, —
It’s funny the way he wears his hat!
He can’t make me cry, though, — that’s what I
say, —
To-morrow, or any other old day!”

I felt admiration mixed with alarm,
And offered my help to shield him from harm;
But proudly he told me that must not be,—
"I can run," he added, "much faster than he."



SOULS AND SOLES OF LITTLE BOYS

I'm sure that the relationship
Between them is remote;
But that they are in harmony
I frequently can note.

Their soul is irrepressible;
It prompts them to make noise,
But grown-ups often interfere,
Thus saddening little boys.

It's then and there they surely can
Upon their soles depend:
With noises weird and creakings loud
Their aid they gladly lend.

And though it's likely that they are
Worn out and have a hole,
The soles have understanding
For longings of the soul.

WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT

Of noises every hour has its share,
But quiet moments are not all too rare

Until the children come to play and shout,
Because it's afternoon and school is out.

If Indians, once inhabiting this isle,
Were not all dead,—had only slept awhile,—
I think they'd flee in terror if they'd hear
The shrilly way in which these new tribes cheer.

Would I, because I happen to be ill,
Have someone tell the children to be still?
Nay! I reflect how short are childhood's joys,
And listen patiently to all their noise.

The time may come when on a bed of pain
They conjure back the joys of youth again:
I would not have them miss one lusty shout
Of precious, carefree hours, when school is out.

FAIRYLAND

The land where stern reality
Has not the right of way,
Is joyfully explored by us
In childhood's happy day.

The eyes to which all life still is
An unknown, wondrous book,
Are fit to find a fairy queen
In every sylvan nook.

The hands, too small as yet for work
The daily bread to win,
Are just the ones to hold the thread
That fairy-fingers spin.

In daily life it soon is hushed,—
Or we're too dull to hear,—
The music such as Fairyland
Brings to the listening ear.

But fortunate are they indeed
Who treasure what they saw;
It helps them to idealize,
Where others find a flaw.

And though their hands quite empty seem
Of precious stones and gold,
Those who have touched the fairy thread
Will happily grow old.

And though the world be out of tune,
There's melody sublime,
For those who passed through Fairyland
In "Once upon a time."

THE HOMELESS PUPPY

For decent dogs the supper hour was past;
You could not understand why you should fast—
And thus you entered through our garden gate
To beg for food, although the hour was late.

Poor little puppy! timid and yet bold,
At once you knew our hearts would not be cold;
You were not clever, yet you tried a test
That satisfied you,—put your mind at rest.

Ere came the saucer filled with milk and bread
All anxious thoughts had left your puppy head:
A lady who let your paws soil her dress
Must pity a poor puppy in distress!

THE PUPPIES

To-day my neighbor has given away
Two of the puppies next door at play;
The black and the white one were carried out,
The brown one and Spotty still play about.

Their mother apparently does not grieve,
Nor tries the missing ones to retrieve;
But if my observation is true,
She sometimes is puzzled over the two.

She looks about, as if finding it queer
That only two of her pups are here;
She worries a bit, but not very long:
"I must," she decides, "have counted them
wrong."

THE PUPPIES ONCE AGAIN

I wrote about the puppies,
Not very long ago;
And though they still are puppies,
They certainly do grow.

They have a way of playing
That's funny to behold:
It seems too bad that ever
They should grow staid and old.

Yet one of them would rather
Be taken seriously;
He strives to be attaining
A greater dignity.

"It all would be quite easy,"
Thinks puppy, looking grave,
"If I were only able
To make my tail behave!"

Its silly way of wagging
Lacks reason or intent,
And when he tries to catch it—
His efforts are misspent.

You couldn't look more funny,
Dear puppy, if you tried,
Than you do when you're trying
To look more dignified.



THE POET'S HEART

MY LITTLE POEMS

I write those little poems
Into a book of mine;
They rest like infants sleeping
'Neath blankets white and fine.

They seem to be awakening
When they appear one day,
Dressed up as printed poems,—
But this is what they say:

"We've heard tremendous pounding
Of huge machinery,
It's therefore not astounding
That still we sleepy be."

But when Miss Schneider reads them
With sweet melodious voice,
Ah! then my little children
Awaken and rejoice;

Their eyes they widely open,
And cheerfully they sing:
"Let's try one gladsome moment
To someone's soul to bring."

PRIDE

If honors came my way, would I be proud?
I know within myself, and say aloud:
"Whatever humans like myself could give
Can't make me proud, as truly as I live!"

Yes, pleasure, satisfaction, what you will,
Might be the proper terms to use; but still
My inmost soul tells me it could not feel
A pride in honors that a word could steal.

Yet, proud I am! There is twixt God and me
A confidence. Could greater pride there be?
And if a day of judgment comes, I know
That with unflinching steps I forth may go.

And to the Judge of judges I may say:
"God, Thou and I alone, we know the day
When, tempted sorely by a grievous sin,
I needed all Thy given help to win."

And I feel sure a loving God will say:
"We had a hard time, both of us, that day!"
Could any earthly honors make me proud,—
Their fleeting glitter ending in a shroud?

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

The critics say, "A minor poet died."
Perhaps thy merits they have justly tried;
They jealously must guard the space
Where greater poets find a place.

They all admit, now Death took thee away,
That many hearts thy poetry could sway;
But they are careful to insist
Just how and where thou shouldst be missed.

Of course they're right who weigh thy poet's
worth:
A minor poet's soul has fled this earth;
But though they criticize and carp,
That soul, it was an æol's harp!

Out of its melodies we ever heard
How human hearts by breeze or storm are stirred;
And hearts will listen for thy song,
Though critics called some verses wrong!

A SUN PARTY

Betelgeuse had lately invited
The smaller suns, who, much delighted,

Had flashed reply per special ray,
That they'd be disengaged that day.

They certainly had sunny weather,
But dared not sit too close together,
So gorgeous was each festive dress—
A bit annoying, I confess.

Our special sun was agitated:
The human beings, earth-related,
Were getting troublesome and quite
Too nosey, also impolite.

“They note each spot in my complexion,
And never ceasing their inspection,
About my smallness now they jeer,
Compared to Betelgeuse here.”

They all found this extremely funny,
And everything was bright and sunny;
The time to leave came far too soon,
When gentle signals made the moon.

OLD BOYS

One often sees in old men's faces,
In spite of wrinkles, boyhood's traces;
As though old age succeeded never
From youth completely them to sever,—

A boyish look can still be found
Though symptoms of old age abound.

How women differ when they're aging!
Though youth forever they are paging,
It's seldom that imagination
Can give most of their years vacation,—
Give Time's great wheel a backward whirl,
And see the matron as a girl.

It seems that, single or well-mated,
They find their life more complicated,
And no cosmetic is invented
By which that look is to be rented
Which reminiscent youthful joys
Of men, when old, makes just old boys.

PLAYING "HIDE-AND-SEEK"

I've played that game in childish glee
On many a distant day;
For me the time for playing
Long since then passed away.

I clearly still remember how
I used to pout a bit
When I found no good hiding-place,
And then had to be "it."

The way I play that game to-day
Is not of my free will;
Yet hardly any day goes by
That I don't play it still.

No sooner I begin to sew,
With everything in place,
When thimble, scissors, or a spool,
Will vanish without trace.

How skillfully they play the game!
They always find a spot,
Which, although eager is my search,
To look in I forgot.

Thus, still I play at "hide-and-seek,"
Though it may not seem fit,
And now it's more annoying, for—
I always must be "it!"

ENVY

Of the weeds in God's great garden,
Envy surely is the worst;
It's the last to be abolished;
But to grow,—it was the first.

Carefully its roots are hidden;
When at last it seeks the light,

Other plants it would resemble,
Thus deceiving at first sight.

When a wanderer approaches,
Singing songs of love and hope,
Speedily his feet entangles
Envy, with a thorny rope.

If the gardeners were distant,
Badly would the victim fare;
Envy tortures without pity,
Often more than one can bear.

But there is a wondrous ointment,
Failure it has never known;
Envy's wounds will soon be healing,
When a faith in God is shown.

MY POEMS IN BOOK FORM?

To me the words "in book form"
Are shaped like cannon balls,
And each one hits a building
Which sways and sometimes falls.

Thus I am kept repairing,
With reasons quickly sought,

The buildings I erected
Within my realm of thought.

There is no doubt about it,—
As I myself can see,—
That many of my reasons
But weak appear to be.

So, to decide the question
For ever and a day,
I asked my poem children
What they might have to say.

Don't say: "You foolish mother,
You've spoiled them, one can tell,
Ignore what they are saying,—
Just print them and they'll sell!"

Now don't think that the selling
Would give me any pain,—
That's relished both by authors
And children of their brain.

When mine I asked, however,
It proved they all felt fear;
They said: "Our work is done by
Appealing to the ear.

“And when Miss Schneider speaks us
We touch the spot we sought,
And form the precious contact
With every hearer’s thought.

“If poetry were lacking,
Our prejudice we’d snap,
And settle into book form
To fill a yawning gap.

“Then we could fight the critics,
No matter what they’d say ;
But from the book-form battlefield
We’d rather keep away !”

THE COMING GENERATION

I spoke to the mother of little Jess,
And it surprised me, I must confess,
To hear of her marvelous intellect,—
Great things of that child the world may expect.

But after hearing the mother of Dick,
Describing his courage, his wit so quick,
It seemed to me difficult to find
Another child with so gifted a mind.

I soon, however, was able to see
That there was naught to discourage me,
For by listening to mothers here and there,
I discovered that genius no longer is rare.

So, if we can't solve the world's problems yet,
Don't be despondent, don't worry or fret:
Just wait till these wonderful children grow,—
The problems will melt as in springtime the snow.



SUNSET ON THE OCEAN

The wondrous Golden City,
The mansions in the sky,—
Each sunset on the ocean
Reveals them to the eye.

I see the amber pavement,
The glittering domes and halls,
The pillars diamond-sparkling
Ere darkness once more falls.

And through the open courtways
Mysterious forms now flit.
Could souls of the departed
Inhabit homes more fit?

THE SELFSAME THING

Oh, if the world, this silly world,
Were serious for one day,
We then could brush all troubles,
Like spider-webs, away.

It's little use to try our best
Just here, and maybe there,—
We have to work in unison
With people everywhere.

And that, as far as anyone
Now clearly can detect,
Just seems, though 'tis ridiculous,
More than one can expect.

Into the Great Beyond we peer,
Would know what it may bring—
If we don't change our nature much,
'Twill be the selfsame thing.

PARTED WAYS

Remorse and I were well acquainted
In former days. We've parted ways.
Oh, how her eyes could look severely,
When Duty I dared to defy.

Quite often I had failed, not knowing
A certain clause in duty's laws;
But though excuses I might offer, —
I bore the cost: my case was lost.

I could not bear this any longer;
I said: "See here, you're too severe!
Warn me before mistakes may happen;
Where that can't be,—don't trouble me!"

Now, when I see her in the distance,
I shun the course that brings remorse;
I clasp the hand of Duty tightly:
It's best indeed to let her lead!

“ALL'S FOR THE BEST”

I have a cheerful theory,—
It's often put to test,—
When things appear contrary,
I say: “All's for the best.”

It has a way of keeping
My drooping spirits up,
When I see fellow-beings
Drain suffering's bitter cup.

And when to me comes trouble,
I diligently try
My theory successfully
In my case to apply.

I would not speak against it—
“All's for the best” is fine!
It's easier, though, to see it,
When troubles are not mine.

CARUSO

The question: "Will he sing again?" is answered.
The Silent Ruler of that silent land
To which all paths we tread in life are leading,
Has taken the great singer by the hand,
And sealed his lips forever.

It were in vain that all the world, protesting,
Would raise its voice to Death in one great cry;
And yet,—a wanderer in times far distant,
May hear from out the cottage he goes by
The voice that will die never.

SEA-GULLS

When I'm growing weary of my daily task,
For a sail across the bay then my soul will ask;
Just to have the water gently carry me
Seems to let my troubles float far out to sea.

If it be in winter, when the sea-gulls fly,
They teach me a lesson, which to learn I try:
As they are approaching like black shadows there,
With my many worries they can well compare;

But their color changes, and when seen near-by,
Shining silvery whiteness on their wings I spy.

Thus of many worries,—black when first they're
seen,—

Closer vision often shows a silvery sheen.

Why not, then, ignore them until they are near?
Life would be more blessed, could we cast out
fear!

WHISTLING IN THE RAIN

A greeting to the sturdy man
Who whistles in the rain!

Who is not under weather's ban,
Nor acts as if in pain.

Men pass before my window there,
With collars drawn up high;
With faces telling of despair,—
Some mutter, others sigh.

And then, amidst the wretched lot,
One bravely strides along,
Who has, it seems, the rain forgot,
And whistles a gay song.

And though the counting of his wealth
Be quickly done, you'll find

He owns a fortune in good health
Of body, soul, and mind.

A pessimist whom I know well
Prompts me two lines to add:
Umbrellas, overshoes to sell,
He thinks the whistler had.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Although Father Time is growing old,
He must with a merry smile behold
The wondrous garden, so gay and bright,
That he sees in bloom each New Year's night,
With flowers called "Good Resolutions."

They're trying to grow to stately size,
And New Year sees them with joyous eyes,
When Father Time, with a twinkle gay,
Allows his youngest child to play,
In the garden of "Good Resolutions."

Then Father Time goes to lock the door,
Through which he let New Year in before;
It takes, alas, not the least bit long,
Ere New Year sees that something is wrong
With most of the "Good Resolutions."

By playfully plucking the ones that droop,
At last there is left but a little group,
And Father Time says: "Since I'm alive,
I've seen nothing planted less likely to thrive
Than New Year's "Good Resolutions."



SPIRITUAL MOVING DAY

We see the shadows, ah, so plainly!

Though often tears obscure the sight;
And, though it must be there, we vainly
Are looking for a ray of light.

Yet well we know that light has ever
A shadow, not too far away.

Let's know as well that we need never
Within the shadow-region stay.

Sometimes a step or two leads thither,
Where flowers in profusion grow.

Why live where buds of hope must whither?
It need not certainly be so.

The realm of happiness is spacious,
And many troubles there get lost;
The few that may remain tenacious,—
Consider them the rental cost.

HAPPY MARRIAGE

Let me take thy hand and wander
Into realms beyond all days;
When we meet the Judge of judges,
That thy hand in mine then stays.

All that's good in me was cherished
Ever lovingly by thee;
And whatever was a blemish,—
That thou didst not even see.

If at times I have been erring,
And the Judge should ask me: "Why?"
Dear, let me not give the answer;
Thou for me must make reply!

If the Judge to thee will listen,
What is in my heart He'll know;
And He'll say: "On both my blessing,
I have judged you long ago!"

MARCH SUN

In March the sun has a way of urging
The many poets to write about spring,
And joyful words to their pens come surging,—
Of sunshine and flowers their verses sing.

The editor sits at his desk, awaiting
The surely coming poetical tide,
An empty basket beside him stating
Where much of the poetry soon will abide.

I said to myself that I'd be wiser,—
 Of things to write about there is no lack;
My muse has never yet been a miser,—
 It's gloriously true, though, that springtime is
 back!

DEEPER JOY

I sometimes wish to see again,
 Friends who live far away;
I sometimes grieve that it's in vain!
 They cannot come, they say.

How truly it would please my eyes,
 Once more them to behold;
To have them come,—oh, glad surprise!—
 Them in my arms to fold.

Could deeper joy than this I name?
 Why, yes, I ought to know:
I felt it when the plumber came
 To stop an overflow.

GARRETT P. SERVISS

A ladder that reaches from here to there,—
From earth up to somewhere, up anywhere,—
Is built by Garrett P. Serviss, and we
Are all invited to climb up and see

Such wonders as never were thought of before
In books about fairies, in mythical lore.

Amidst suns that dazzle by sight and by size,
To measure which Science can merely surmise,
Where imagination, untrammelled and free,
A world without ending, in glory can see:
There is the top of the ladder high
That Garrett P. Serviss has built to the sky.

GRAINS OF HAPPINESS

Sometimes at night before I sleep
My thoughts I "at attention" keep;
And make them trace throughout the day
The happy moments, passed away,—
To lay them in a shrine.

They are like little grains of gold,
Although the hours appeared to hold
But moments, very much the same,—
Thus thought I of them, when they came,—
Ere memory made them mine.

Remembering, I pass review
Of thoughts and looks and words anew;
I find so much that causes mirth,
And newer visions come to birth,
As meanings I define.

We lose much precious happiness
That's sent to us our life to bless,
Because we let it slip away:
Don't grope in darkness through the day,—
The sun will rise to shine!

POETRY vs. PROSE

Good poetry can melt the crust
Of ice around a heart;
It says you "may," when Prose says "must,"
And helps you do your part.

It stops the angry, hasty word,
Your lips part in a smile;
Something within you, like a bird,
Is singing all the while.

In poems,—though they be but dreams,—
As Prose delights to say,
You'll find the sunny, hopeful beams,
The new-born, happy day!

A GHOSTLY VISION

What was it that awakened me—
Who by my bed was sitting?

Did I forget to lock the door
As nightly I find fitting?

The moonbeams shed a silvery light
When I my eyes was lifting;
I saw them on the bedroom walls
From place to place a-shifting.

I tried to think, when, lo! I saw
That strange form nearer moving;
"Who are you there?" I cried in fear.
It spoke in tones reproving:

"My name is Worry, and you think
My power to treat lightly,—
Indeed, you scarcely look at me
When daylight's sun shines brightly.

"Don't fall asleep, but keep awake
And listen to my mission!"
I yawned, then tightly closed my eyes,
And thus spoke to the vision:

"Your errand I am sure will keep;
I favor not your hurry;
Come in the daytime, if you must!
At night,— good-night to worry!"

GRATITUDE

They'll tell you: "Gratitude is dead!
Don't ever hope to find
For all the good that you may do
A truly grateful mind."

They sadly speak of former days,
Of days they can't forget,—
The wondrous days, when virtues bloomed
In rich profusion yet.

Among them there was Gratitude,
Which now has passed away:
"It was the fairest of them all,"
Regretfully they'll say.

Now it is true that many plants
That graced God's garden fair,
Have disappeared, because, perchance,
They needed better care.

The seeds, however, still are left,
And leaves they'll bravely show,
If we but give them the right soil
In which to thrive and grow.

But Gratitude would still be missed,
Though we search high and low:
For only where we do not seek
Real Gratitude can grow.

Give joyfully what you would give,
And then forget you gave;
If you insist on Gratitude
You'll dig for it the grave.

ONE HOUR

An hour that might have brought much sorrow;
An hour that might have brought much joy;
We passed it by, a moment spent it,—
We played with time as with a toy.

As children of the sun, our longing
For light, more light, was gratified;
No doubt the sun looks down upon us
With deeper love and greater pride.

But Father Time his bill presenting,
When summer once more says good-by,
Will pull his forelock, and ask firmly:
"Where is that hour you folks passed by?"

DUTY

Once in a while I feel lazy,
I can't see the use of work;
The vision of Duty grows hazy,
What gravely She tells me, I shirk.

It seems to me She is hiding
A wee little trace of a smile;
Then turns away without chiding,
To come again after awhile.

She knows how my feet must stumble
When She is not there to lead,
And ere things are all in a jumble,
I tell her She's welcome indeed.

THE UNFINISHED EMBROIDERY

I began a piece of embroidery,
Ah, many years ago,
With violets blue, and roses, true
To colors in which they grow.

I forgot that piece of embroidery
Till yesterday afternoon;
It looked like new, and with a few
Deft stitches I finished it soon.

But, alas, for that piece of embroidery!
What makes it look so queer?

Why, here and there,—'most everywhere,—
I must have dropped a tear.

DECEITFUL MIRRORS

"Mirrors are deceitful," Mother used to say;
She advised I'd better turn my face away.
But I answered lightly, with a merry smile,
And believed in mirrors for the longest while.

Ah, it takes a study,—yes, of many years,—
Till their fault, long hidden, painfully appears.
Now I am no longer anyways in doubt:
Mirrors are deceitful: I have found them out.



FACES

Faces there are that tell their story
To all who use their eyes to see:
Their sad defeats, their times of gladness
Are plainly read, require no key.

Faces there are without expression,
Whatever happens leaves them blank,
They go through life somewhat like puppets
Wound up with automatic crank.

Faces there are that first will test you
Ere they permit you to explore,
And if they do not deem you worthy,
They'll hide their treasures as before.

Faces there are that keep you guessing,
Where in the world you've met before;
Though you are ignorance confessing,
They seem to knock at memory's door.

And sometimes in the crowded places,
There comes a thought to you like this:
Here I see faces, faces, faces,—
But seek in vain the one I miss.

THE SOUL'S REPLY

Speak, my Soul, what difference does it make
Whether we believe in God or not?
Why should punishment await the doubter,—
An eternal hell of brimstone hot?

Could a God so powerful and mighty
Be less generous than human kind,
Who can pardon various offences
Where they ignorant the sinner find?

“Nay!” I softly hear my Soul replying,
“ ‘Tis not God who made your flaming hell;
Neither did he make your kind of Heaven:
Man made both,—and made his God as well.”

DREAM SONG

When I dream the dreams I love to dream,
When reality must distant seem,
When a fairy takes me by the hand,
And leads me to a wondrous fairy land,—
Then walk gently, and behold a sign:
“Trespass not, these premises are mine!”

It is easy thus to miss the clue
Of the things I urgently should do;

For to do, and not to dream, is life!

Fairies walk not in our land of strife!
And perhaps, reality is best,—
Trespass boldly, when in dreams I rest!

AFTER DEATH

I'll not cling to the earth,
Nor the land of my birth,
Nor the glad sun that over them shone;
For my soul has a home of its own
That at last, at last I may see!

Then the rain may pour
And the wind slam the door,
I'll not care, I'll not care in the least:
Be there clouds in the West or the East,
They are less than nothing to me.

I shall need not a thing,
No propeller nor wing,
Just a wish of my soul will suffice
To be borne beyond stars in a trice,
To whatever Paradise be.

And were I to tire,
And should I desire
To try once again life "as is,"

I feel that a wish just stating this
Would at once be granted to me.

THE GLAD TO-MORROW

The songs that you heard yesterday
Perhaps were songs of sorrow;
Now listen to the strains of hope,
In music of to-morrow.

Don't let sad echoes of the past
Through future days be ringing,
Nor make them dominating chords .
Of tunes your life is singing.

And though at times a tempest wild
Through many measures rages,
We are quite sure to hold our own,—
If Hope will turn the pages.

“THY WILL BE DONE”

Once I wanted, oh! so badly,
Things to happen in my way,
And I wanted God to hear me:
Thus I asked my soul to pray.

Just to have my dear wish granted,
I was going to implore
That a miracle should happen,
As they did in days of yore.

But before my prayer ended,
Suddenly it came to me,
Like a question, most important,
That at once must answered be:

“Should God grant thy supplication
In thy way or in His own?”
Though in tears, I firmly answered:
“Thy will, God, be done alone!”

THE PATRIOT'S HEART

“OVER THERE”

Faith and Hope are badly shaken,
Sometimes nigh despair
At the awfulness of slaughter,—
Over there, over there.

Love is sorrowing and weeping
For the youth so fair
That is sacrificed in battle,—
Over there, over there.

But a wondrous message comes to
Mothers everywhere:
That their sons now all adore them,—
Over there, over there.

Shattered faith and broken hope can
Love alone repair,
For more love the world is calling
Over here and over there.

“MOTHER!”

One of our boys, just home from the dance
That Death had invited them to in France,
Told of a battle he had been in,—
Of bloody horrors, of cannons' din,

And added softly, with far-off gaze:
"That day inscribed in my memory stays,—
My Bunkie's last word was: 'Mother!'"

There was a silence, then said someone:
"Did you come across our neighbor's son?
He died in a hospital over there.
How well I remember his golden hair!"
"I saw him! Unconscious he lay on his bed;
It was his last night,—next morn he was dead,
I heard him whispering: 'Mother!'"

Another silent moment went by;
A girl tried to speak, but began to cry;
And as we all pondered why wars must be
And why so much heartache and cruelty,
The soldier, not fearing they'd call him a "siss."
Went to his mother and gave her a kiss,
As he lovingly called her "Mother!"

THE PEN AND THE SWORD

The sword was calmly resting
When wakened by the pen;
The pen will have to make it stop,—
The sword won't rest till then.

O ye who go to wield the sword,
Your might is but a loan,

And you are scarce responsible
When victims moan and groan.

It is the tiny, little pen,
That, never proud or vain,
Just quietly and humbly serves
The plotting human brain.

But they who dedicate the pen
To rouse the thirst for blood,
Though good come from the bad they planned,
They'll tremble to meet God!

“HERO PARK”

The Generous Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Louis Dreyfus

Living memorial to the noble dead
Who sacrificed their all where duty led,
As roots of trees cling to their Mother Earth,
Thus in our hearts we feel our heroes' worth.

Among us, those who their beloved ones gave
Think now, perchance, about a distant grave.
Could they forget? Nay, ever in their heart
Live they who thus supremely did their part.

When gentle breezes in the branches play,
Message of comfort be it what they say:
"Do not forget the ones who were your best,
But cease to grieve,—they truly are at rest."

Winters will come and summers reappear,—
For life and death are ever neighbors near,—
Comfort to bring in times both bright and dark:
That be the mission of this "Hero Park."

THE WARLESS FUTURE

A time is coming that sets wrong to right,
That ends all wars. For why should nations
 fight

And kill their sons on bloody battle-ground
When cause for war no longer can be found?

"Will human nature thus improve?" you ask.
And if a pessimist, you'll doubt the task
Will ever be accomplished while we stay
In mortal bodies that return to clay.

I'll gladly to these questions make reply,
And, though improvement I would not deny,
It seems just now that wars have but begun,
If nations all crave places in the sun.

This is the one solution I can see:
They'll surely do so; and, twixt you and me,
Our scientists must find enough new suns
To fill the need,—and silence thus our guns.

PREPAREDNESS

D'Annunzio before Fiume

Of military training,
There'll be no further need;
All nations have their poets,—
They're plentiful indeed;
What Italy's brave poet did,
They all might do, if they were bid.

Quite small are the expenses,—
For each of them, of course,
Would readily bring saddled
His Pegasus, the horse!
Our poets' value long was hid,
Let them new paths to glory skid.

No further need of airships,
For Pegasus has wings;
No oats he'll want to feed him,—
Just glory, hope, and things!
Don't tell this plan to any foes:
They'd take advantage, goodness knows!

PRIVATE LINES TO A PRIVATE

He went and came a Private,—
And what else should he be?
I claim him as my private,
Exclusive property.

The times they may bring changes,
And others him may claim,—
I'll still love him in private
As always, tout-de-même.

No matter, though, how private
My private thoughts may be,
I love this special Private,
Because my son is he!

SERVICE FLAGS

I saw a monstrous service flag
A-waving from afar,
And hardly was there room on it
For still another star.

Now all throughout the working day
Each star on that long list
Stands for a man who at his work
Annoyingly is missed.

It's hard to find a substitute,
All must be taught anew;
Perhaps at last efficient are
Of many but a few.

I saw a modest service flag,—
How silly to compare
That trifling little one-starred thing
To yonder grand one there!

Ah, but I know that in the day
And in the night-time too
That star does conjure back a form
Where substitutes won't do.

That star means not a working hand,
It means a loving heart,
It means a bridge of tender thoughts
That distance cannot part.

APPLAUDING OUR BOYS

We stood and saw them marching
Along the Avenue,
Prepared to risk in battle
Their lives for me and you.

We stood and we applauded,—
And then we turned away:
'Twas time to be attending
To business of the day.

We often sadly missed them,
Our boys who went across;
The lists of dead and wounded
To each of us meant loss.

And, oh! how we applauded,
In theatre or in hall;
Not just for this or that one,—
Nay, we admired all!

Most gladly we bade welcome
When to us they returned,
Undying love and glory
We told them they had earned.

We had them march through arches
Real costly to erect;
And, oh! how we applauded!—
What more can they expect?

THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

They bring a soldier's body
In native soil to sleep;

His name has not been entered,
Where lists of names they keep;

But somewhere an old mother
Believes it is her Jim;
He wrote about a battle,
When last she heard of him.

Another bravely whispers:
"The Unknown may be Sam,—
But I'll no longer mourn him,
For proud indeed I am."

And thus the "Unknown Soldier"
Whose true name is not known,
Is claimed by many mourners,
With loving pride their own.

We'll bury him with honors
The highest, I heard tell,—
Don't let's forget our duty
To treat his buddies well!

IN ALL ETERNITY

The dead from many a country
Had reached their goal at last;

They stood before the portals
Where war and strife are past.

In hatred they had gathered
And with revengeful thought,
Intent on slaying enemies
As unto death they fought.

And when they felt approaching
Death's silent, icy hand:
"We die for thee," they murmured,
"Beloved native land!"

The heavenly portals opened;
Behold! they heard a call
That welcomed to one country,
Eternally, them all.

THE LILTING HEART

THE LITTLE SECRET

I knew a little secret,—
It was a restless thing:
“Oh, do tell me to someone!”
It constantly would sing.

“You silly little secret,
If ever you were told,
Just one less little secret
This busy world would hold.”

Thus I tried explanation,
But all to no avail;
The little secret pouted:
“I’m growning old and stale.”

So it was told! And when I
One day met it anew,—
It was a great, big secret
That everybody knew!

JUNE

I know a little maiden,
Her pretty name is “June;”
I also know her birthday
Is going to be soon.

She's rather independent,
But lacks a certain poise,
And when she takes a tumble—
We hear a lot of noise.

But mostly she is happy,
As children ought to be;
When asked her age, she'll proudly
Tell you: "I'll soon be 'fwee'."

A BIRD'S LECTURE

It's time to give a special chapter
To that queer bird who is the captor
Of earth and sea and atmosphere,—
I'll show him in a picture here.

He has no feathers! Thus, of beauty
You will admit, it is my duty
To state that he has none to spare.
None that with ours one could compare.

His wings are surely quite deficient,
But do not call him inefficient:
In recent years we saw him try
Like birds of higher class to fly!

Of course we'll ever be superior,—
The human bird is our inferior;
A wind too high, or one too low,
Forbids him on his flights to go.

In future we may well be prouder,
And chirp our admiration louder
When fledglings boldly leave their nest,
Nor have to stop—the wind to test!



ELECTION TIME

The folks on optimism strong,
Alas, quite often are proved wrong !
They don't see things as they are true,
But in a fair and pleasant hue.

For though the pessimists declare
That human goodness is too rare,
The optimistic see each day
That virtue has not passed away.

And surely they must feel delight
When the elections are in sight;
Just read what every paper states
About its chosen candidates :

Each one of them, (Oh ! glad surprise)
Is loyal, honest, brave, and wise.
It seems that optimists have won !
Don't read more papers, though, than one !

THE HONEYMOON

Oh, yes, they were the Newlyweds,
Though both advanced in age;
And both experienced-looking quite,
With life's so changeful stage.

Around them stood, with sparkling eyes,
Young girls who begged to see
Her wonderful big diamond,
Nor was reluctant she.

They then described where they had been
While on their honeymoon,
And both declared it was a shame
It had to end so soon.

“Ah, yes, there’s but one honeymoon!”
Was one fair girl’s reply.
A silence fell, most eloquent,—
I heard a furtive sigh.

For he and she were figuring,
And passing in review,
The honeymoons that had been theirs,—
And they were quite a few.

DAILY BATTLES ON THE *FINLAND*

Though the sun be shining
And the air be clear,
There’s a sort of battle
Every morning here.

Not about a country
Or important things,—

Just about our steamer chairs
That each night take wings.

When we rise, refreshed by sleep,
And would get some air,
Then our friend the steward has
Long before been there.

Strangers calmly sit where we
Have a previous right;
Ah! If glances were to kill,—
Few would live at night.

Could a “League of Nations”
Ever settle this:
How to act correctly,
When your chair you miss?

No! There is but one way
Of which all approve:
Just you watch your chance and then
That strange chair remove!

Everyone does likewise, and
Though it may have flaws,—
On our ship the *Finland*
We need special laws.

S. P. C. A.

They watch in anguish that rough, human hand,
Stretched forth to where defenselessly they
stand,—

The suffering creatures who dare not complain,—
Well knowing it would surely be in vain.

That hand now pushes till they gasp for breath;
Still more,—almost into the jaws of death!
The patient creatures do not cry out loud,
For—they are humans in a Subway crowd.

ELLIPTIC STARLIGHT

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Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
Give us answer from afar,
For our scientists explain,
In a way that gives us pain.

Tell us why you have of late
Turned from pathways that are straight;
Does your light go on a strike,
When too near the sun you hike?

Little star, don't make us guess!
Rather wouldn't you confess

Why you try with all your might
To deflect your starry light?

Little star, I wish you'd talk:
Wherefore that elliptic walk?
Did a drink affect you, say,
Maybe on the Milky Way?

NATURE-LOVERS

The sparrows flock with chirps of glee
To settle in my cherry tree;
They evidently never tire
Its robe of blossoms to admire.

The boys when passing through the street
Will for a moment stay their feet;
They see the bloom,—ah! yes, they do,—
They must be nature-lovers too.

A new gift I within me find:
I'm expert reader of the mind;
In thoughts about my cherry tree
The boys and sparrows both agree.

Their admiration is not quite
Platonic for its robe of white:
They both anticipate the hour
The ripening cherries to devour.

DAYLIGHT SAVING

The same alarm-clock that arouses
The merry lark, her song to try,
Should make us humans leave our houses,
Now darksome winter has gone by.

Our bodies are a heavy fetter,—
We cannot, like the birdies, soar;
But can't we use that one hour better
Than rest asleep in bed and snore?

Our hands can work, creating beauty,—
Our minds cling to no earthly sphere;
Get up, for pleasure and for duty!
And show you're glad that Spring is here.

THE THREE-CENT STAMP

I used to be quite popular;
Am so no longer now,
Since they on all the letters
The two-cent stamp allow.

My dress is so much prettier
Than hers of glaring red:
But yet, the public's love for me,
Alas, is almost dead!

There is one thing to comfort me,
And so I must not cry:
I've heard that two-cent postal cards
Must also say: Good-bye!

A WOMAN'S AGE

There are times when past years weigh on me,—
Like Methuselah's my age might be;
Sad, old eyes then watch the world rotating,
And my age correctly to be stating
Such a number I would have to use,—
To believe me people would refuse.

Other times I watch with smiling mirth
All that happens on this foolish earth;
Those are days when old age seems so distant,—
Nay indeed,—it's simply non-existent;
But you'd say or think: "That is not true!"
If my youthful age I'd state to you.

Altogether it were surely best,
Just to let the silly question rest.
Woman's age should hide behind a curtain,—
It is ever more or less uncertain!
Have them study, vote, and office hold,
But refrain from asking: "Pray, how old?"

MESSAGE FROM MARS OR VENUS?

Of course it wasn't Mars,—t'was Venus!

We know her flirting ways of old;
If anything, she has been growing
More enterprising and more bold.

Did we not witness here quite lately—
We scarcely could believe our eyes!—
That novel ways of promenading
The moon was trying to devise?

It seems she had no previous knowledge
About the man that's in the moon,
And so he went his way sedately,—
There was no one with whom to spoon.

Now Venus tried to ask Marconi
These questions not so long ago:
"Is he a married man or single?
How old? Pray tell me,—if you know!"

DRESDEN CHINA

On the mantle they've been standing
For the longest while;
With enraptured admiration
He looked at her smile.

Roguishly she seemed to ask him :
"If you think me fair,
I should think you'd try to kiss me,
'Stead of standing there!"

In her hands, so small and dimpled,
She held up a ball;
Yesterday she must have thrown it,
For I heard a fall.

Him, alas! in many pieces,
I found on the floor;
She again the ball was clasping,
Smiling as before.



OUR NEIGHBOR MARS

Such papers as on Mars they read,
Brought most exciting news indeed,
For a reporter had declared
That we on earth would be prepared
To gaze into our neighbor's door,
In nineteen hundred twenty-four;

That we their picture meant to take,
And that we now great efforts make
To have the instruments just right,
When Mars is not too far from sight.

The Martians then resolved that they
The selfsame compliment would pay;
Marconi they at once advised
How much our courtesy they prized,
And that they'd cultivate meanwhile
The customary pleasant smile.

Marconi got the message well,
But what it meant he could not tell;
And it is very much to fear,—
Unless we change till Mars comes near.—
Our planet neighbor will move hence,
And start to build a higher fence.

CONFUSING ANSWERS

Once there were days when sunshine was more
bright,
And stars were twinkling gayer in the night;
Then flowers bloomed that now no longer grow:
But was it thus?—or did it seem but so?

The seasons, too, are somehow changed, I think;
I nevermore go to the skating rink,
Nor climb the verdant hills as long ago:
Has all this changed?—or does it seem but so?

Confusing are the answers, I am told:
“Ah! those were better days,” comes from the old;
“Yes, they were different,” the young folks know,
“Thank Heaven, present times are not so slow!”

MEMORIES

I met a man who had grown old since last
I'd seen him, and my youth had also passed,—
Become mere memory from day to day;
For youth can linger, though it cannot stay.

But soon our lively conversation found
The distant past a happy hunting-ground,

And recollection lent a fleeting trace
Of distant youth to his old, wrinkled face.

“Your dark-haired beauty I admired. Oh! why
Did I not tell you so in years gone by?”
Thus spoke he with a reminiscent smile,
And I was in a pensive mood awhile:

That of my “dark-haired beauty” he’d been fond
Seemed strange, for I had always been a blonde.

1921

Welcome, Stranger! How your pockets,
Filled with parcels, fairly bulge—
Pray, don’t offer an objection,
If in hopes we now indulge.

Does, perhaps, that longish bundle
Hold a peace that none may break?
Does that box so round and polished
Hold the nation’s angel cake?

Did Time put a daily blessing
Into yonder paper-bag?
Is perchance a horn of plenty
Covered by that silken flag?

1920, now departed,
Many fond illusions stole:
If your gifts, New Year, are better,
See your pockets have no hole!

IN A LETTERBOX

“For heavens sake! Can’t you be careful?
You’re pushing right against my face;
How many more of you are coming?
You’re filling up each bit of space!”

“Pray do not think us without manners,—
It’s just as painful as can be!—
We all of us are invitations
To members of society.”

“Well, I regret thus having blamed you.
For each of us, of course, might know,
That we are not at all consulted
When in this box we have to go.”

“Let me explain,” then said a portly,
Experienced-looking manuscript:
“Not one of us without a mission
Into this letter-box is slipped.

“But it depends on those who wrote us,—
And then, again, on those who’ll read,
And still, again, on circumstances,—
Whereto our future way may lead.

“While some of you on silver platter
Will soon be resting from this crush,—
I may be thrown into a basket,
And hear the editor say: ‘Slush! ’ ”

THE GARBAGE MAN’S HORSE

A very easy job
That horse has at our door,
He likes to pass it by,—
To stop seems such a bore.

His master did not care
While pleasant was the clime,
And ashes there were none
All through the summertime.

But now they disagree,—
To say the very least,—
For angry is the man,
While stubborn is the beast.

The man comes in the gate,
Then loudly he shouts: "Whoa!"

The horse just ambles on,
And thinks: "Oh, is that so?"

The man lifts up the load,
And says what no one hears;
Then "whoa!" and "whoa!" some more—
The horse just shakes his ears.

If I his language knew,
That horse I would implore
To stop just twice a week,
For ashes at our door!



HUMAN COAL

When passengers must furnish
The rush hour subway heat,
To sit next to a fat man
Might well be deemed a treat.

No wonder that great Cæsar
Preferred them to the lean;
He spoke those words in winter,—
We now know what they mean.

The people who are skinny
Will these days see how fine
Is friendship with the stout ones,
Who travel on their line.

The company should pay them
A part, if not the whole,
Of money they are saving
By using human coal.

They should allow the fat ones
A salary each day,
And have them live in suburbs,
To make them earn their pay.

“REST IN PEACE”

As to the Unknown, which succeeds this vale of tears,

Even the brave amongst us often harbor fears;
But I'll tell of a man, who, married to a shrew,
Declared that gladly he'd bid life adieu!

Now, that's just it! We're always far too quick to say

The things we must regret, soon or some distant day.

(These latter words refer to her, not him,
For the reports of “After Death” are dim!).

He died, and bitterly she mourned him when alone.

This the inscription that I read upon his stone:
“Belovèd husband, rest in peace, till I
Am called by Death to join you bye and bye!”

THE LETTER-CARRIER'S BAG

When he begins his route the bag is filled,
And carefully he sees that none get spilled
Of all the many letters that therein
The last stage of their travels now begin.

His bag is light when later he returns;
In burdened heart perhaps a message burns
That in his bag to one had lain quite near,
That brought another heart bright joy and cheer.

It seems to me that destiny thus strides
Throughout this world with well-filled bag that
hides
Until the hour, when timely it may be,
What Life has sent addressed to you or me.

SOLILOQUY OF THE PRINCE OF WALES

One question lingers in my mind,—
Thus far no answer I can find:
Is there a place in this wide land
Where Grandpa did not sit or stand?

I go about, and everywhere
Someone points out to me a chair
In which I have to sit, you know,
Like Grandpa sixty years ago.

In every speech, in every toast,
I must behold my Grandsire's ghost;
By Jove! It's an endurance test!—
The ghost and I, we both need rest.

THE PRICE OF HAPPINESS

I had not meant to buy it,
The way I did last week,
Nor was it just the happiness
That usually we seek.

But are we always choosers?
I think we must say, "Nay!"
Quite often we don't want the thing
For which we have to pay.

And often what seemed happiness,
And to our hearts most dear,
The poorest sort of bargain was,
That grieved, and gave no cheer.

Now, though the shoes I purchased,
Are very much too tight,—
It certainly spells happiness
To take them off at night.

OUR LEAGUE OF NATIONS

We've a model league of nations
At our country boarding place,—
That it's giving satisfaction
You can read in every face.

As to "self-determination"
Of the nations that are small,—
They can play and they can frolic,
But they must come when we call.

At the table we are trying
Export, import, with success,—
Calmly see a dish departing,
Pass it on without distress.

For we know our share is coming,—
Empty dishes don't make sore,
When we see that from the kitchen
Constantly they're bringing more.

Will the league be everlasting?
Just believe me when I say:
It will last while all its members
Have the cash and will to pay!

A PRAYER

Lord, listen to my prayer,
Although I seldom pray,
Yet there is something urgent
That I would like to say:
I'd like to be a "bum," please hear!
But not for life,—just for a year.

A year, or not much longer
Will be enough for me,
For after that I'm planning
A college man to be;
My reasons, Lord, are manifold—
Hurrah for College ere I'm old!

But then perchance, I'm asking
Too much (folks sometimes do!),
And I should be contented
With one wish of the two:
In that case, Lord, the "bum" I'll drop.
Now, one more word, and then I'll stop:
I hope that my two wishes
I clearly have defined;
Don't, Lord, make me a "college man"
And "bum" as well, combined!

THE PEOPLE ON MARS

We harbor hopes that future
Discoveries may teach
How folks on other planets,—
For instance, Mars,—to reach.

Not far away are places
Where lean mosquitoes swarm
And where they are a-singing
In summer when it's warm:

“We’d like to get acquainted,
We’d like to find the way:
There may be folks above us
Who long for us this day!”

Perhaps on Mars the people
Are pining for us thus,—
As we pine for mosquitoes
To find their way to us!

A PROTEST

It seems we stand divided
On everything in sight;
Just now we’re getting ready
To quarrel about light.

The ones who want to save it,
Say life would be enhanced,
If clocks were all set going
With time one hour advanced.

Then, those who should be healthy,
And wealthy, also wise,—
The farmers of the country,—
In protest all arise.

The sun they want kept going
In just the way it used,
Before the city people
Got everything confused.

The sun is calmly rising
In early morning's pink,
Unchanged by all the spilling
Of wit and printer's ink.

TWO MIRRORS

Two mirrors in my house are not the same
As other mirrors, and each bears a name;
A window gives "humility" much light,—
Its greenish glass makes every face a fright.

And where in time a wrinkle may appear,
This mirror proves that such a time is near;
You humbly wonder why you're out of bed,—
It seems but lucky chance that you're not dead.

I hasten from "humility" away
To see what "consolation" has to say.
This mirror's glass has also minor flaws,
Which possibly the nice results may cause.

It tells at once that wrinkles are a slur,
Concealing them with a most friendly blur
And lack of light,—but why explain, forsooth?
Although I love, I need not pamper truth.

BENEFACTORS OF MANKIND

A man had placed a nickle
Into a certain slot;
The music started playing,—
His money's worth he got.

There stood about him, listening,
The people young and old,—
A soft expression coming
In faces hard and bold.

It's often claimed that mankind
Has benefactors few;
How circumstances alter . . .
A case I saw anew.

Another man now started
A tune not far away;
Instead of feeling grateful,—
The noise drove folks away.

THE BEADED BAG

It would be nonsense, I declare,
To use my bag of beauty rare,
For wear and tear of every day!
I'll save my beaded bag, I say.

Now, why is it?—does someone know?—
When with a shabby bag I go,
I'll surely meet the people who
Own beaded bags, and use them, too

The very folks that nice things prize,
And for whose beauty-loving eyes
My beaded bag would be most fit,—
They get no chance of seeing it.

BOBBED HAIR

Daughter wants to bob her hair!
It's her own,—so why, then, must
Mother argue in despair,
As though all her faith and trust
Were entangled in that hair?

Mother's little girl to her
By bobbed hair is not improved.
Problems most annoying were
Ever since the world has moved,
But a new one is bobbed hair.

And most likely it will last
Till it is no longer new,
Unless world-old fashions passed,
And we all,—not but a few,—
May decide to bob our hair.

OUR FURNACE

Our furnace does its very best
On days when it's not cold;
Nor will it then insist on all
The coal that it can hold.

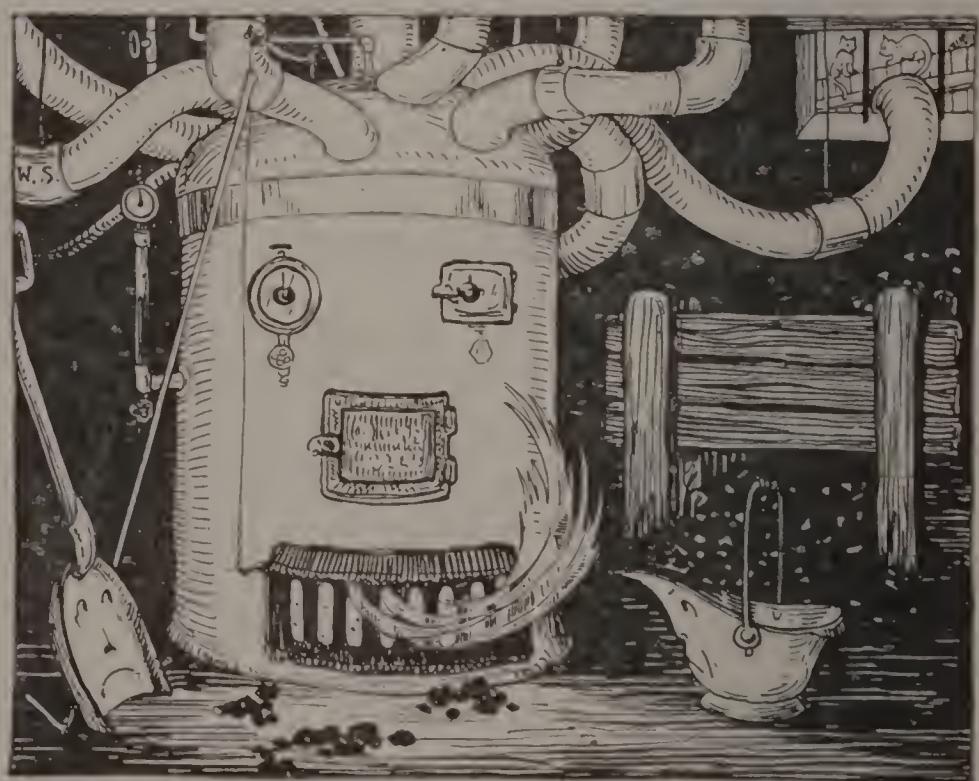
Quite modestly it then consumes
What we may choose to give;
Nor does it threaten to die out,—
No fear!—it means to live.

Quite different its character,
When icy blows the air:
Upstairs you then might almost think
The furnace wasn't there.

It's never on a diet test,
When blizzards howl and blow,—
We wonder as we fill it up
Where all the heat may go.

I think it travels out and warms
Our neighbor's garden fence,
For often I see groups of cats,
Who gladly travel hence.

It is a sort of Florida
For cats in wintertime,
And gratefully they'll serenade
My furnace, for the clime.



MID-WINTER'S DREAM

When I dream of honeysuckle,
 But a short time hence,
Hanging down in fragrant beauty
 From the garden fence;

When I think of last year's blossoms,
 Of the smooth, green lawn,
Of the birdies' merry twitter
 At the break of dawn;

Then I feel a deep rejoicing,
 And my heart grows light,
Thinking of the perfect beauty
 Soon to come to sight!

When I think of last year's blossoms
 And their insect pests,
Of the birds that stole my cherries,
 When they'd built their nests;

When I think of all the places
 Filled with sturdy weeds,
Of the lawn that far too often
 Tedious mowing needs;

Then I know the coming summer,
Fine though it may seem,
Certainly cannot compare with
My midwinter's dream !

NEAR PERFECTION

By aiming at perfection,
I often come to grief :
Keep safely at a distance,—
Such is my firm belief.

My hand will hold the hammer
And strike the nail with care ;
My work looks almost perfect,—
It's time then to beware.

One stroke might still improve, though,
I aim well,—then I hit,—
And might have reached perfection,
Had not the moulding split.

It's surely far from easy,
To stop when near the goal,
But gives the wood and fingers
A chance for staying whole.

We should aim at perfection,
Should try to reach the top;
But when we're fairly near it,—
It's sometimes wise to stop.

A SUBWAY UNDERSTANDING

The name of "Mr. Yesterday"
At once came to my mind,
When he came in a subway train
And tried a seat to find.

Some youngsters, our to-morrow's men,
Deemed him a funny sight;
Although he bore with dignity
His locks of silvery white.

How different he seemed to be
From people up-to-date;
As though, with all his leisure, he
Just never could be late.

A laborer of middle age,
Gave up to him his seat,
When poor old Mr. Yesterday
Was tottering on his feet.

He took it with a courtly bow,
Which made the youngsters wink,
And more intently than before
They chewed their gum, I think.

Now, something here was surely wrong,—
I scarce knew what was it,—
Till one of the two boys got up
To let the laborer sit.

Old “Yesterday” was seen to smile
As at a welcome sight;
“To-day” sat down and seemed to say:
“To-morrow’ll be all right!”

THE OLD-CLOTHES’ MAN

Day after day he’d walk about
And ceaselessly he thus would shout:
“Cash for ole clothes; pay cash, pay cash!”
When someone moved a window sash,
He would at once gesticulate
And eagerly his errand state.

Last week I had him at my door,
And tried what I’d not tried before,—
To sell a suit that here and there
Was slightly worse for daily wear,

And which at once he called a "rag"
Ere he had laid aside his bag.

Then, while he pulled the suit about,
And tore the lining inside out,
He pointed to each little stain,
Each sign of wear with great disdain.
"What do you want?" I heard him cry,
When I just thought he'd never buy.

My answer: "Tell me what you'll pay!"
Impatiently he waved away,
But when I mentioned a fair sum
It seemed, indeed, to strike him dumb;
He looked at me, looked at the clothes,
And went off snorting through his nose.

If for the truth he cared at all,
Something like this he ought to bawl:

"Pay cash for clothes,—your best will do,
Though I may buy nice old ones, too,—
But rather than give cash away,
With pots and pans I like to pay."
When Hubby starts his suit to seek
He'll find a pan that's sure to leak!

MARCH

March has come! Now hold your horses,—
Do not rhapsodize of spring,
For Jack Frost has kept some arrows,
Which ere parting he may fling.

When the folks are almost frozen,
As they sit and try to read,—
Then the poems, spring describing,
Have a narrow chance indeed.

For they want things when they want them;
Not too late, and not too soon;
When their soup stands ready waiting,
It is then they want a spoon.

But the poet sees spring's beauty,
And of poems writes a group,—
Harboring a hope within him,
That they'll earn a plate of soup.

A DISCOVERY

They long for it, they plan for it
In countries everywhere,
The land of true democracy,—
I've found it! It is there!

Three winding stairs I bravely climbed,
Though out of breath, I fear,
Then reached a hall and someone said :
"The Chess Club meets in here."

It was a world within the world,—
They welcomed all who came,
Provided they were lovers true
Of chess, the royal game.

What mattered nationality,
What money, or what creed?
Perfect devotion to one aim
Was filling every need :

This land of true democracy,
Long flourish it and thrive,—
And may its Golden Jubilee
Successfully arrive !

WELL-WISHER TO SCIENCE

I hope that Science may proceed
To find the keys we humans need ;
To give an explanation clear
Of many things that now seem queer.

Yes, quite sincerely I can tell,
I hope with Science all goes well,
Although I have begun to find,
That Science sometimes is not kind.

For instance, when I used to see
A well developed, stately tree,
I thought my admiration keen
A soulful quality must mean.

Now Science says, it's no such thing,
But that our eyes still fondly cling
To trees, because we recollect
Our ancestrage in retrospect.

A ROMANCE OF THE CLOTHES-LINE

It was a Monday, the weather fine,
The clothes fluttered gaily on the line;
They like that day,—it gives them a chance
To have a most delightful dance!

And some of them gossiped about a silk shirt
That with a kitchen towel did flirt:
“Why must they again be side by side,
With a line so long and a space so wide?”

I looked at the shirt, and,—would you believe?—
Around the towel it had its sleeve!
The only romance this is, I may add,
That ever the kitchen towel has had!



THE HOMING HEART

STATEN ISLAND'S NEW PIERS

This island has been pierless
Until the other day;
You now can't call it pierless;
Yet peerless it will stay.

If reading what I'm writing
You may not find it queer;
For those who do not see it
I will explain it here.

A trifling change in spelling,
One letter ("i" for "e")
Told of the piers they're building
That pierless we not be.

No longer being pierless,
Improving thus our shore,
Our chance of being peerless,
Is greater than before.

Now, this needs no explaining
The reason is quite clear:
A peerless isle, not pierless,
More peerless must appear.

SHOW PLACES OF STATEN ISLAND

It usually costs money,—
And plenty of it, too,—
To own a stately show place,
Like wealthy people do.

But since that smooth Italian
Arranged its front to paint,
My house became a show place,
Not stately, but so quaint.

I told him to be careful
To make the colors match;
He said he would; but somehow
It seemed a gaudy patch.

That was before the downpour
Of rain washed it away,
And left a combination
Of gastly hues to stay.

I went and told the painter:
“My house is quite a sight!”
“The paint was bad,” he answered,
“I’ll come and fix it right.”

He kept his word: now partly
It shows a better paint,
In shades so bold and glaring,
No rain can turn them faint.

The people who are passing,—
Though first appearing stern,—
When they have seen those colors
With smiles their faces turn.

I'll soon look for a painter
To start repainting it,
Before they raise my taxes,
As for a show place fit.

MY OPINION OF STATEN ISLAND

I'll not go about telling people
Just what of this island I think,
Nor will I confide my opinion
To paper and printer's ink.

I'm sure the result would be awful,
One cannot say all that is true;
It's not enough to be truthful,
One must be considerate too.

"There's certainly room for improvement,"
I'm mostly careful to say
When ending up my description
Of this island and of the bay.

For if I should be so neglectful
As this remark to forget,
They'd all come to Staten Island,—
And the rest of the world be "To Let."

MY SERVANTS

There's never any kind of fuss
Because they want to leave;
You see, the servant problem thus
Gives me no cause to grieve.

I told them not to care or mind
In case I were to ring;
Perhaps you'll think me overkind,
But that is not the thing.

My cook has only holidays,—
Pray do not find this strange;
It's nice to see how she obeys
And keeps far from the range.

But very seldom I rebel
And tell them they were missed,
Because, you see, the truth to tell,
Those servants don't exist.

STATEN ISLAND'S PLACE

Our boats leave often in a manner
For which the Scriptures gave the tip;
You stand and wait close to the gate-way,
Then: "Boats leave from the other slip."

I don't know whether all quote Scripture
And say: "The last shall be the first,"
But trust this schedule will be followed
When human schemes, like bubbles burst.

The other boroughs that now tell us
That we must take our place behind
May be surprised (let's hope ere Doomsday !)
Where Staten Island they will find.

WHO IS HAPPY?

Perhaps it's true what pessimists
Declare with gloomy air:
"There's no such thing as happiness,—
We may as well despair."

Now certainly these last few weeks
Brought hardships not a few;
The question: "Who is happy?" then
Arose in me anew.

But as I watched the garbage pails,
Lined up, row after row,
There came an answer to my mind:
"At last," I said, "I know.

"The garbage man is happy now,—
Perhaps he's at Palm Beach,
Where no complaints of housewives can
His tender conscience reach."

But when he passed my way again,
And I expressed delight,
And hoped that his vacation had
In every way been right,

You should have heard his tale of woe,—
It brought me back to prose;
At last he left my ashes there
And told me: "They is froze!"

SPARROWS' WINTER HOME

Some sparrows have come for the winter to stay;
In my cherry tree they made their home to-day;

They did not think of conferring with me
As to the price that the rent should be.

There has never been in that tree as yet
A sign displaying the notice "To Let,"
And I know wherever those sparrows went
They never yet have had to pay rent.

Of such sordid matters I would not speak
But now they've discovered their roof to leak:
And all through the day with its steady rain
I hear my tenants scold and complain.



THE HOUSEWIFE'S FOE.

Of a warfare never ending
I would sing a little song:
Of an enemy unbeaten,—
Still, as ever, bold and strong.

“Dust” he’s named! alas, victorious
He’ll remain, I’ve cause to fear,
For a daily resurrection
Ever lets him reappear.

Sometimes in the midst of battle
Tauntingly he seems to say:
“You yourself will turn to dust, dear,
That is certain, some fine day!”

But I’ll not let that thought worry,
For I confidently trust,
That the harps in Heaven glitter
Free from any trace of dust!

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

The time to tell my ice-man
How I dislike his ways
Is not on one of summer’s
Ice-melting, sunny days.

For though it might relieve me
To speak out freely, yet,—
I fear that on the next day
My ice-chest he'd forget.

And then, again, in winter
I try with all my might
To speak and write of miners
In terms that are polite.

I may tell them next summer,
Or some time late in spring
That their atrocious strikes are
The meanest, basest thing.

I'd like to ask, however,
Right now, in accents meek:
Why stones they must keep digging,
When coal is what I seek?

A TEN-DOLLAR BILL

Last Monday morning I cast a sad look
At a Ten-dollar Bill, in my pocketbook:
For I knew, no matter how I'd arrange,
Within a few hours that bill I must change.

The milkman for milk, or the baker for bread,
Would take it and give me small change instead;
And others would join them, till at the last,
Ere night came it would be a thing of the past.

The milkman, the baker, and others more,
Came sooner that day than ever before,
And each of them said: "It's too early still,—
I can not yet change a Ten-dollar Bill!"

But though, as night came, it still was with me,
It bore a look annoying to see,—
It seemed to declare with a haughty air:
"I'm no longer yours,—though I am still there."

EARLY HARVEST

In my garden chiefly grow,
Many kinds of weeds,
And I wondered what became
Of the many seeds!

In the cherry tree to-day
Sang a little bird;
As I listened to his song,
This is what I heard:

“When you sow the seeds in spring,
I my harvest find,—
And I do not think I leave
Very much behind.

“When you think of harvesting,
Listen to my song,—
And next springtime, without fail,
I shall be along!”

“Birdie,” said I, “though your song
Certainly may cheer,—
Peas and beans *et cetera*
I prefer next year!”

A LAST WISH

The day I'll die (It may be far or near),
I care not much, for I have naught to fear—
But if I'd have my wish on that last day,
I'd want to go once more across the bay.

There should not be a bright and glaring sky;
I love to see the gloomy clouds chase by,
And love to see the tiny bit of blue
So cheerfully between the clouds peep through;

I love to watch the sea-gull,—no one's slave.—
Bob up and down on silver-crested wave!
Once more across the bay I'd want to go
On *Mayor Gaynor*,—slowest boat I know.

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